



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

For More Information:

Kevin Jeffers, P.E.
Project Manager
JefferK@wsdot.wa.gov
360-705-7982

www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/PNWRC_PtDefiance

WSDOT State Rail & Marine Office
360-705-7900
www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/rail



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**
WSDOT State Rail Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia, WA 98504-7407



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Pt. Defiance Bypass Project



Passenger trains will avoid the slower, congested route. This will improve travel times and free up space on the congested route, resulting in an improved rail system.

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Pt. Defiance Bypass

What is the Pt. Defiance Bypass Project?

Passenger trains, including Amtrak Cascades, currently must slow down due to curves and single-track tunnels on the BNSF Railway main line tracks near Point Defiance and along southern Puget Sound.

This project will reroute passenger trains to an inland route. The bypass is on an existing rail line that runs along the west side of Interstate 5 (I-5), through south Tacoma, Lakewood and DuPont. It reconnects back to the BNSF Railway main line near Nisqually on the east side of I-5.

What are the project benefits?

These improvements will allow passenger trains to use the bypass route without being delayed by freight or Sounder trains. This will result in:

- Improved Amtrak Cascades reliability.
- Provide faster and more frequent Amtrak Cascades service. Speeds will be increased up to 79 mph, reducing travel times between Seattle and Portland.
- At least one additional Amtrak Cascades round trip between Seattle and Portland will be added once this and another major project in Vancouver, WA is completed.
- Allow increased freight rail service around Pt. Defiance and along southern Puget Sound by eliminating passenger trains from the BNSF Railway main line.

What improvements will be made on this route?

This project is located along an 18-mile corridor owned by Sound Transit. Improvements that will be made include:

- A new second track between 66th St. in South Tacoma and Bridgeport Way in Lakewood.
- New rails, ties, and ballast between Lakewood and Nisqually along the west side of I-5.
- Improved connection to the main line near Nisqually.
- Safety improvements at ten road/rail (at-grade) crossings, where the rail line and the road cross one another at the same level.

Part of the proposed route of this WSDOT project is the same route that Sound Transit will use to extend Sounder commuter rail to Lakewood. Sound Transit will administer the construction of the improvements. WSDOT and Sound Transit are working together to save time and money by ensuring that construction only has to be done once in any one location.

Are significant impacts expected as a result of the project?

WSDOT has done extensive research and modeling in many areas including traffic, noise, and wetlands and have found no significant impact will result from the project. A summary of the environment analysis is available on the project web page at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/pojects/railpnwrc_ptdefiance.

How will construction proceed?

Work in Segment 1 – between Bridgeport Way and 66th – began in June, 2009 along with Sound Transit’s planned work between Bridgeport Way and “M” Street in Tacoma. Additional funding is required to complete the new segment between “D” Street and “M” Street, including the bridge over Pacific Avenue. A recent federal grant from the ARRA High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program may fill the funding gap and allow construction to begin as early as Summer 2010. However, it has not yet been determined if this project has been selected to receive funding from the ARRA grant.

How is the project funded?

This project is funded through the following WSDOT sources:

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 2005 Partnership Funding (Vehicle Weight Fees) | \$21.0 million |
| 2003 Legislative Transportation Package (New & Used Vehicle Sales Tax) | \$21.0 million |
| Pre-existing Funds (State & Federal grade crossings) | \$57.9 million |
| Total funding from all sources* | \$99.9 million |

* This does not include work by Sound Transit on this route.

WSDOT Improvements

Segment 1:

- Constructs second track from South 66th Street, past Lakewood Station and Bridgeport Way.
- Safety upgrades and improvements to five road/rail grade crossings to accommodate the second track, and so trains can travel up to 79 mph.

Segment 2:

- Upgrades tracks and improves existing connection to BNSF Railway main line so trains can travel up to 40 mph from Nisqually to Mounts Road and 79 mph from Mounts Road to Bridgeport Way.
- Safety upgrades to five road/rail grade crossings.



Sound Transit Improvements

- Constructs new single-track connection between D Street and Chandler Street, including new bridge over Pacific Avenue.
- Upgrades tracks between Chandler Street and the new Lakewood Station, so trains can travel up to 65 mph.
- Upgrade ten road/rail grade crossings outside the WSDOT project area.
- Constructs new layover facility in Lakewood for Sounder trains to stay overnight.

What is the project timeline?

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Environmental and Engineering | Began Summer 2006 |
| Public and Agency Open House | November 2006 & June 2008 |
| Environmental Process | Completed May 2007 |
| Final (Complete) Design and Permitting | Winter 2007-2008 |
| Begin Construction on Segment 1 | June 2009 |
| Complete Construction on Segment 1 | Winter 2010 |
| Begin Construction of Segment 2 improvements* | Summer 2010 |

*Construction on Segment 2 is dependent on securing funding for the Sound Transit planned “D” Street to “M” Street improvements in downtown Tacoma.

Grade crossings planned improvements

| LOCATION | Flashing Lights & Gates | Medians | Pre-Signals | Wayside Horns | Traffic Signal & Roadway Improvements |
|---|-------------------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| South 74th Street | X | X | X | | X |
| Steilacoom Boulevard SW | X | X | | X | X |
| 100th Street SW | X | X | | X | X |
| 108th Street SW | X | X | | X | X |
| Bridgeport Way SW | X | X | X | X | X |
| Clover Creek Drive SW | X | X | | X | |
| North Thorne Lane SW | X | X | | X | X |
| Berkeley Street SW | X | X | | X | X |
| 41st Division Drive (entrance to N. Fort Lewis) | X | X | X | | X |
| Barksdale Avenue (Dupont-Steilacoom Rd) | X | X | | X | X |

Medians deter driving around gates.
Pre-Signals keep vehicles from backing up onto tracks.
Wayside Horns confine horn noise to the grade crossings.